United Nations A/C.1/50/PV.9

General Assembly
Fiftieth session

Official Records

First Committee
9th Meeting
Wednesday, 25 October 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdenechuluun . . . . . (Mongolia)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Hoffmann (Germany), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda items 57 to 81 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Keating (New Zealand): I should like to convey my congratulations to Mr. Erdenechuluun on his election to the important post of Chairman of the First Committee. He and the members of the Bureau can be assured of our full cooperation over the coming weeks.

This has been a difficult year. The international community has had to think very hard about its security needs. We have taken some difficult decisions and there have, unfortunately, been some grave set-backs. This is a good time to review the situation and lay the groundwork for what will, we hope, be a better year in 1996.

The non-proliferation regime was discussed in depth at the Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Important commitments were entered into at that meeting. They must be implemented. The Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament that were adopted in May are the yardstick by which Parties to the NPT will measure progress on non-proliferation and disarmament between now and the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Review Conference in 1997. We believe that there must be tangible progress in order to build confidence that our shared goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons is achieved. A world without nuclear weapons is achievable but the lesson of the past 12 months is that we must have a concrete strategy for reaching that goal and that we must stick to it.

New Zealand is pleased with the results achieved this year in the comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT) negotiations in Geneva. But much remains to be done if the treaty is to be signed in 1996, as was agreed at the NPT Conference. We will be joining our traditional partners, Mexico and Australia, in seeking this Committee's endorsement of a timetable to enable signature by the outset of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. We believe that the pace of negotiations would be accelerated if China and the Russian Federation were formally to adopt the same welcome position taken by the United States, France and the United Kingdom on the scope of the test ban. We were encouraged to hope from reports about the recent meeting between President Clinton and President Yeltsin that there will indeed be promising developments in this regard. New Zealand believes that complete prohibition of any nuclear explosion, no matter how small, is essential if the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation benefits sought by the international community are to be delivered.

Addressing the Special Commemorative Meeting just three days ago, the New Zealand Prime Minister, Mr. Jim Bolger, reiterated that New Zealand finds it inexplicable and unacceptable that China and France are still testing nuclear weapons. As we move into this final phase of the negotiations on the comprehensive test-ban treaty, such actions, in total disregard of overwhelming international opinion, are of grave concern to New Zealand and indeed to nations in every region of the world.

95-86426 (E)

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

The commitments that all Parties to the NPT assumed in May were aimed at a world in which nuclear weapons would be eliminated. Nuclear testing has never been and is not now consistent with that goal. On the contrary, it is a deplorable step backwards, reviving fears that the nuclear-arms race is not over. It sends the wrong message to States that aspire to the possession of nuclear weapons.

New Zealand condemns nuclear testing wherever it occurs. But New Zealand and its South Pacific Forum neighbours have been particularly angered by the resumption of nuclear testing in our region by France. The second nuclear test conducted by France at Fangataufa on 2 October further damaged relations with the countries of the South Pacific Forum and resulted in the suspension of France's status as a "dialogue partner". Calls for China and France to heed international opinion and to end their testing programmes will not cease until testing ceases.

The recent Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement strongly deplored nuclear testing. The General Assembly must also deliver a very strong message. New Zealand, along with a representative group of like-minded States, will shortly submit to this Committee a draft resolution rejecting nuclear testing and demanding that this unacceptable behaviour cease.

An immediate end to nuclear testing and the conclusion by mid-year of the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty would help to restore confidence that the NPT programme of action is back on track. These, however, would only be first steps. When the nations of a whole region freely choose to renounce nuclear weapons for ever, we move closer to our goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. New Zealand therefore warmly congratulates the countries of Africa on the adoption of the Pelindaba Treaty in June. We will join wholeheartedly in the General Assembly's endorsement of the African nuclear-free zone.

Equally, we look forward to the completion of negotiations on a nuclear-free zone in South-East Asia. A nuclear-free Africa and South-East Asia, together with the areas covered by the Treaties of Rarotonga and Tlatelolco and the Antarctic Treaty, open up the possibility of a southern hemisphere free of nuclear weapons.

The respect of the nuclear Powers for such zones is critical to their effectiveness, as the NPT Principles and Objectives now recognize. The recent decision by France, the United States and the United Kingdom to sign the Protocols of the Rarotonga Treaty is thus most welcome. For 10 years, we have been urging those countries to join China and the Russian Federation as signatories. Their decision now to do so is a positive step forward and demonstrates a growing awareness of the strength of the region's feelings.

But we need to do much more. The General Assembly agreed at its forty-eighth session that negotiations to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons should begin. The Conference on Disarmament took responsibility for the negotiations and this April established an Ad Hoc Committee for that purpose under its agenda item dealing with the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament. Indeed, all parties to the NPT are committed to the immediate commencement and early conclusion of cut-off negotiations. This Committee must again endorse these negotiations and urge the Conference to overcome its procedural difficulties and start its work immediately on the basis of document CD/1299 of 23 March 1995.

Furthermore, the establishment by the Conference on Disarmament of an appropriate mechanism to prepare the ground for further multilateral efforts towards the goal of nuclear disarmament would certainly be consistent with the commitment in article VI of the NPT to complete nuclear disarmament. Looking beyond the conclusion of the CTBT and the cut-off negotiations, New Zealand has suggested a ban on the production of nuclear weapons as a further step towards permanently ending the nuclear-arms race.

The importance New Zealand attaches to non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament is fully matched by our concerns in the field of conventional weapons. Today's conflicts, and their unacceptable civilian toll, are fuelled by the widespread availability and irresponsible accumulation of conventional armaments.

We believe that the international community must urgently seek remedies to this situation. Greater transparency in military matters and the nurturing of confidence between States are the key elements required for bringing about the regional and global stability which would contribute to reducing excessive and illegal trade in conventional weapons.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is a starting-point. We would like to see universal returns and the provision of background information on military holdings and procurement through national production. We continue to believe that it is necessary to expand the scope of the Register so that the transparency benefits of participation in it are more widely shared.

Transparency would also be better served if more States fulfilled the terms of resolution 40/91 B, in which the General Assembly recommended that all States provide

details of their military expenditures. Document A/50/277 and Add.1 shows how few States are prepared, even now, to give this basic information and how many fewer are prepared to provide a proper breakdown of the total figures. While working to improve global measures, we should not overlook the benefits of building confidence through transparency at the regional level. New Zealand is pleased to be part of the efforts currently under way in the context of the Association of South-East Asian Nations Regional Forum, which held its second ministerial meeting in Brunei recently.

In this context, I need to refer to the problem of landmines, which continue to kill and maim thousands of people every year. It is indictable that at the recent Conference in Vienna it was not possible to achieve agreement on any measures to strengthen the controls on anti-personnel landmines. New Zealand is extremely disappointed at the outcome of the Review Conference. We remain committed to the goal of the elimination of all anti-personnel landmines, and we hope that, notwithstanding the outcome in Vienna, the international community will quickly reach agreement on abolishing these weapons.

However, bringing agreements into effect is just as important as concluding them. In this context, New Zealand continues to attach great importance to the early entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. So far, 40 States have ratified the Convention, and I am pleased to say that the necessary domestic action to enable New Zealand to ratify it is well advanced. We urge other signatories to place high priority on early ratification to as to enable entry into force to take place, as we hope it to, in 1996. The Preparatory Commission at The Hague will also need to intensify its preparations for the establishment of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons over the coming months.

We are pleased with the start that has been made in the ad hoc group to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. New Zealand will be working, in particular, for legally binding verification arrangements. We hope that the ad hoc group will be able to secure sufficient meeting time in the coming year to enable it to consider new measures at the next review Conference, in 1996.

Such a full agenda allows for no delays, and it requires responsive and efficient disarmament machinery if we are not to lose the opportunities for progress which are now available. Few would disagree with the proposition that the agenda and machinery inherited from the General Assembly's first special session on disarmament were created for a different era, one of the past. We should not postpone indefinitely the task of readjusting our machinery. Reform of United Nations structures is in the air. The General Assembly has established a High-Level Working Group to look at all areas. The disarmament machinery cannot remain immune from these demands for reform. This Committee, through the thematic discussion we will shortly be having on disarmament machinery, has the opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the deliberations of that Working Group.

What we must avoid at all costs is the carry-over into 1996 of the stalemate which gripped the Conference on Disarmament this year on the questions of its agenda, composition and work methods. Notwithstanding the results produced in the comprehensive test-ban treaty negotiations, the Conference must show itself to be responsive to the international community's expectations that it be accountable for making progress on the full range of substantive disarmament questions. It must also be representative of the international community for which it works.

In this regard, we pay tribute to the current President of the Conference, the Ambassador of Morocco, for his efforts in securing a first important step towards expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. We would remind members of the Conference on Disarmament, however, that they are committed to taking the second step, which is to implement the expansion at the earliest possible date. Given the many years that have elapsed since the last enlargement, this second step should not be delayed beyond the start of the 1996 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

Last year, in resolution 49/77 B, the General Assembly reminded the Conference on Disarmament that it was funded under the regular budget and that a more representative membership was essential. It urged that expansion be accomplished early in 1995.

Despite its progress, the Conference on Disarmament has failed to meet the General Assembly's deadline. For too long we have had taxation without representation. As the New Zealand Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade said to the General Assembly in his statement on 28 September this year, this situation remains unsatisfactory. If the status quo continues much longer, a repeat of the Boston Tea Party here in New York is inevitable.

This fiftieth session is more than a time to reflect on past achievements and lessons learned in the field of disarmament and arms control. It is also a time to take stock for the future — to decide what we can do now to secure peace, stability and prosperity in the twenty-first

century — and then to begin to move forward together to achieve those goals.

Mr. Wyzner (Poland): Let me first offer my congratulations to the Chairman on his election to his post at the head of the First Committee at this historic juncture in the annals of the United Nations. As an old friend of his, I know that the profound and extensive experience of multilateral diplomacy and disarmament that he brings to his office will be important assets for our productive deliberations. Both he and you, Mr. Acting Chairman, will have my delegation's full cooperation in the discharge of your important duties. I also wish to add my sincere felicitations to you, Sir, and all the other members of the Bureau.

Since Poland has associated itself with the statement that Spain made on behalf of the European Union, in my intervention today I should like to offer only some remarks of a more general nature.

Several years my mentor, a distinguished member of the International Court of Justice, the late Manfred Lachs, observed that

> "At San Francisco we believed we were setting two objectives on the road to peace: decolonization and disarmament. We thought that decolonization would take at least 50 years, while disarmament we could achieve in a decade. In fact, it turned out to be exactly the other way around."

I am recalling the words of Judge Lachs because, on the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, they remind us that ever since the founding of the Organization — indeed, since the dawn of the nuclear era — disarmament has been among the top priority issues on the United Nations agenda. These words also exemplify how far we have fallen behind the target date we had anticipated at that time.

The fiftieth anniversary session of the United Nations General Assembly is the right moment to take stock of the advances made in the field of arms control and disarmament over the past 50 years. Our debate may highlight not only what has been accomplished but also what is still pending on the disarmament agenda. For decades concern over how to avoid nuclear conflict preoccupied nations. It is no coincidence that the very first resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, adopted in the wake of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, sought to ban nuclear weapons and ensure the use of nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful ends. Despite continuous United Nations attention, the growing cold-war confrontation pre-empted any chance of success for these early efforts.

The situation was radically changed as the cold war subsided. The disappearance of the bipolar world and the historic transformations that followed its demise ushered in an international climate truly conducive to meaningful disarmament. Two important Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties were signed, followed by the Treaty on the Reduction of Conventional Forces in Europe, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Open Skies Treaty, the Lisbon Protocol and many other agreements. They have all become major political and diplomatic achievements. These accords, momentous as they are, are obviously only the first steps in the right direction — to cut back the worst excesses of the East-West arms race. Even though some of them are not yet fully effective, they have nevertheless contributed to making the world a more stable and secure place in which to live. However, the risk of global nuclear conflict has been replaced by new challenges to stability and security. The classical notion of stability, based upon an equilibrium between two adversarial groups, has undergone a fundamental modification. International security in turn has become multidimensional.

It is against this background that in its foreign policy Poland has been motivated by a strong desire to help to build a new Europe, one without divisions and conflicts, ensuring well-being and security for all — a Europe better prepared to cope with new challenges. This policy translates into unremitting efforts to integrate Poland into the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, in recognition of the role of these bodies as guarantors of security, stability, democracy and the economic development of the continent.

The new challenges, coming in the form of intra-State ethnic or religious conflicts, much too often tend to be characterized by untold violence and unusual cruelty. As we know only too well, the principal victims of the violence nowadays are mostly non-combatant civilians — the young, the old and the infirm. These new challenges do not suggest at all that arms control and disarmament have become irrelevant or that they have no valid role to play in preventing conflicts, reducing the risk of war, strengthening confidence and enhancing international security.

The disarmament tasks ahead are still staggering. Nuclear arsenals have yet to be trimmed of their overkill potential. So, despite the impressive record of disarmament and arms-control accomplishments, sustained efforts, both bilateral and multilateral, continue to be indispensable to the improvement of the global security environment. We must not miss the window of opportunity created by the end

of the cold war. Now is the time to seriously explore issues once deemed intractable. In our view, the United Nations provides the most suitable framework within which to expedite constructive debate on the post-cold-war disarmament agenda.

In that respect, the international community made a highly auspicious beginning last May. The decisions of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to extend the NPT for an indefinite period, to strengthen the process of its future review and to lay down a set of principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament are of historic importance. Their significance cannot be overestimated. They come as an eloquent acknowledgement that after decades of military build-up, the scenario of a nuclear doomsday is beginning to fade from our minds.

The far-sighted resolve to extend the NPT has cemented the principle of non-proliferation into a binding rule of international conduct. A major step has thus been taken to put the nuclear genie back into its bottle. We hope it will be followed soon by further steps. The agenda of unfinished business in the nuclear area is much too long for the international community to be complacent about it.

The most pressing business still pending in that regard is, of course, the completion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. The Committee will recall that the States Parties to the NPT agreed last May, *inter alia*, that 1996 should be the target date for the completion of the ongoing negotiations on that Treaty and that pending its entry into force, the nuclear-weapon States should exercise utmost restraint.

Regrettably, such restraint has not yet been demonstrated by some of the nuclear-weapon Powers. The echo of nuclear tests accentuates the urgency of a test-ban agreement. My country hopes that the test explosions will not slow the pace of the negotiating process. If anything, they must strengthen the determination of the international community to spare neither time nor effort in accelerating the negotiations on the Treaty and to complete them by the target date.

Poland welcomes the progress which the Conference on Disarmament has been able to make so far in these negotiations, especially in 1995. The extent and importance of the progress is reflected in the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly. The rolling text of a draft comprehensive test-ban treaty annexed to the report leaves no doubt that the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, which the representative of Poland, Ambassador Dembinski, has had the privilege of chairing this year, stands a good chance of completing its mandated task on time. Several factors in particular seem to support this belief.

Poland, as well as many other members of the Conference on Disarmament, warmly welcomed the declaration of the President of the French Republic that France would sign the treaty, without any conditions, in the autumn of 1996. The second factor is the combined effect of the formal commitments of the United States, France and the United Kingdom and — as we understand — of the Russian Federation as well, to seek a true "zero-yield" test ban treaty. The fact that these nuclear-weapon Powers have opted for a commitment

> "not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions"

is tantamount to a major breakthrough in the efforts to achieve a comprehensive and internationally verifiable test-ban agreement in the near future.

Like many other members of the international community, Poland is persuaded that such a commitment, supported by all five of the nuclear-weapon States, would add the decisive momentum to efforts aimed at the timely finalizing of the comprehensive test-ban treaty negotiations.

We also find the increasing convergence of views in other key areas of the negotiations most encouraging, notably - verification. An important meeting of minds has emerged concerning the architecture of the future international monitoring system, as well as procedures governing on-site inspection. No less meaningful is the flexibility with which the negotiators have been addressing, *inter alia*, the issue of equitable sharing of costs involved in the implementation of the future treaty. The tendency to adopt an appropriately adjusted United Nations scale of assessments, as the basic principle underlying the financing of the comprehensive test-ban treaty can lead to an acceptable solution.

As the comprehensive test-ban treaty negotiations enter the "end game", it becomes ever more obvious that finalizing the draft treaty by the target date may not be automatic without sustained political will, flexibility and a sense of urgency on the part of all delegations at the negotiating table. From the position of the Chair, Poland will spare no effort to ensure that the short time available between next November and January 1996 shall be put to the best use for the negotiations. We believe that the treaty should be ready for approval by the resumed meetings of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly and that it should be opened for signature — at the latest — in the

autumn of 1996. We note with interest the invitation of Japan to hold the signing ceremony in that country.

As we all know, it was only by default that in 1995 the comprehensive test-ban treaty negotiations received the undivided, priority attention of the Conference on Disarmament. It is regrettable that owing to a dispute over procedure, no other substantive and pressing issue before the Conference on Disarmament could receive the necessary attention this year. This goes for the question of the legitimate aspirations of the non-nuclear-weapon States to obtain satisfactory security assurances. In this respect, Security Council resolution 984 (1995), as well as the unilateral declarations of its five permanent members, could add momentum to a productive debate on the question of negative security assurances.

We deem it even more regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament was unable to address the issue of the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other military purposes, despite the prior agreement of the Conference on Disarmament on the establishment of an appropriate ad hoc committee and on its mandate. We consider it imperative that the Conference on Disarmament proceed with all due dispatch to examine all aspects of "cut-off" - in keeping with the agreed mandate and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. In our view, the overriding interests of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament brook no further delay.

The Government of Poland considers it gratifying that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations coincides with a remarkable success of efforts to proscribe weapons of mass destruction. A major accomplishment of the Conference on Disarmament - the Chemical Weapons Convention - stands out in this regard. Signed by nearly 160 States since it was laid out for signature in Paris in January 1993, it was supposed to enter into force early this year. The slow pace of its ratification obviously holds back its practical application. Poland, which was actively involved in the negotiations of the Convention, was one of the first signatories of that Convention. Last July Poland ratified the Convention and soon thereafter deposited its document of ratification with the Secretary-General of the United Nations - the thirty-fifth signatory State to do so. At this time steps are being taken to prepare national implementation measures to assure strict compliance with the provisions of the Convention.

We are pleased to find States with important and highly developed chemical industries among those that have already ratified the Convention. This fact seems to disprove claims that provisions of the Convention, especially its verification regime, hamper legitimate activities conducted in civilian facilities. We therefore urge those States which have not yet done so to sign the Chemical Weapons Convention without further delay and to open up the process of its ratification at an early date. Accelerated ratification of the Convention would bring it into effect and would support the efforts which the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is undertaking to ensure the strict implementation of that instrument. This call is addressed in the first place to States with substantial stockpiles of chemical weapons. We take note with satisfaction of the important progress made by the Preparatory Commission in the discharge of its difficult tasks, as reported by its Executive Secretary, Mr. Kenyon. Still, we shall not gloss over our concern that attempts are being made to reinterpret some of the key provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Such attempts are clearly incompatible with the Commission's mandate entrusted to under the Paris resolution.

Poland firmly supports efforts to strengthen the 1970 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) by supplementing it with an appropriate verification protocol. The Government of Poland welcomed the initiative to hold a Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention to consider ways and means of enhancing the effectiveness of that instrument. We fully endorsed its decisions, including the establishment of an Ad Hoc Group of States Parties. We are confident that by the fourth Review Conference of the BWC, in 1996, the Group will make an important breakthrough in its efforts.

To our mind, a legally binding verification protocol, based on the obligation of States Parties to provide mandatory declarations and accept effective on-site inspections, would establish a regime acceptable to all States Parties. Pending agreement in this respect, we believe that it is imperative to enhance international cooperation on a non-discriminatory and equitable basis to promote peaceful applications of biotechnology and to prevent the proliferation of biological weapons.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Professor Bartoszewski observed in his statement in the general debate in a plenary meeting of the General Assembly, the Government of Poland believes that the remarkable disarmament advances in regard to nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction should be paralleled by serious consideration of all aspects of conventional arms. It is no exaggeration to say that conventional arms used in innumerable regional conflicts since the beginning of the nuclear age account for many more victims than have been

claimed by nuclear arms. These weapons have, therefore, to be seriously addressed, in addition to the attention which is being devoted to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Poland, of course, resolutely supports the United Nations Register as an important vehicle for the promotion of greater transparency and confidence in the field of conventional arms. In accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions, Poland has been regularly submitting annual reports to the Register, in the requisite standardized form. We believe, like many other States, that the scope of the Register should be further expanded to cover military holdings and procurement from national production.

My country is gratified that one, albeit fragmentary, aspect of conventional arms, notably anti-personnel land-mines, are currently receiving the increased attention of the international community. The fact that land-mines are so easy to lay, yet so difficult to detect and dangerous to remove, is undoubtedly one of the root causes of the global land-mine crisis so frequently decried in the course of the current session of the General Assembly. According to the often quoted estimates contained in the Secretary-General's report of 1994 (A/49/1), there are more 110 million uncleared land-mines lying in the ground of more than 60 countries worldwide. All of them are probably still in good working order long after hostilities have ended and the combatants have moved away. The land-mine crisis is a global humanitarian crisis which is dramatically deteriorating. There are 2 to 5 million new mines laid each year, against the mere 100,000 that it was possible to clear next year.

Also, in Poland we are trying to cope with the legacy of vast quantities of land-mines and artillery projectiles which date back to the Second World War. For the past 50 years they have been claiming a steady toll of lives and have maimed many people, mostly unsuspecting civilians, often children at play.

It is obvious to us that concerted action by the international community is imperative. It is necessary to deal with the land-mine problem in order - at least - to prevent it from becoming more serious. In response to General Assembly resolutions 48/75 K of 1993 and 49/75 D of 1994, the Government of Poland has declared a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land-mines that do not have self-destruct or self-neutralizing devices. It has also pledged to make an important contribution to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance.

At the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, which ended recently in Vienna, Poland gave its resolute support to efforts to strengthen the Convention, in particular its Protocol II on land-mines. We regret that less progress has been made in that regard than the international community might have expected. We trust that the attention paid at the Conference to the Protocol on land-mines, especially its application to non-international conflicts, will not be in vain and will lead to an appropriate accord soon. Poland has been gratified by the progress, which proved to be possible in Vienna, in respect to Protocol IV on blinding laser weapons.

In the considered view of my delegation, the measures sought in Vienna would stand a greater chance of materialization if and when the Convention obtains universal support. We, therefore, deem it indispensable for the General Assembly to urge the States Members of the United Nations which have not yet done so, to adhere to the Convention and its Protocols, especially Protocol II on land-mines, without further delay.

Poland recognizes the need to enhance the effectiveness of the disarmament mechanisms which the United Nations has at its disposal. At a time when a high premium is placed on their pragmatic, cost-effective and productive functioning, it may be advisable to go beyond the immediate and necessary goal of the rationalization of work and reform of the agenda of this Committee.

Effective measures should be sought to ensure that the United Nations Disarmament Commission can play a truly meaningful role as a body in which important problems of international security are productively addressed at the threshold of the twenty-first century. Poland also finds it regrettable that the effective work of the Conference on Disarmament - the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body - has in 1995 been virtually paralysed in areas other than that of the comprehensive test-ban treaty negotiations. Dating back to the bygone days of the cold war and the bipolar world of adversarial blocs, the Conference on Disarmament today needs to reflect more adequately the global realities in order to cope with the new challenges at the threshold of the new century. It should, *inter alia*, become more representative of the international community today. In this respect, Poland welcomes with satisfaction the first step taken by the Conference on Disarmament to expand its membership by offering it - in principle, if not yet in fact - to 23 States. We are hopeful that another decision will soon follow granting these States the status of fully-fledged, de facto members of that body. Needless to say, we have been of the opinion all along that no arbitrary barriers should be erected to prevent a State

interested in disarmament efforts, and willing to contribute to them, from obtaining membership of the Conference of Disarmament.

Poland is aware of the interest which some States take in the possible convening of another special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in the future. This matter, in our view, should be considered in the light of the heavy calendar of disarmament events already scheduled for the next few years. We need to bear in mind, in particular, the extensive review process with regard to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) which will focus the attention of States parties as of 1997.

We believe, moreover, that the potential which is inherent in the process outlined in the declaration on the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament - a document unanimously agreed upon at the NPT Review and Extension Conference - should be carefully explored in the context of a debate on the necessary enhancement of United Nations disarmament machinery.

In conclusion, let me stress that Poland is proud of its active role in regard to matters of peace and international security. We have sought to make a meaningful contribution in those areas through our direct involvement in the United Nations peace-keeping missions and multilateral disarmament negotiations. We remain strongly committed to these goals. We shall not shirk our responsibilities in that regard, either today or in the days ahead.

Mrs. Tomová (Slovakia): I should like, on behalf of the Slovak delegation, to congratulate Mr. Erdenechuluun of Mongolia on his election as Chairman of the First Committee in this anniversary year — a very important occasion for the United Nations — and to assure him of the delegation's support in the discharge of his responsible assignment.

We associate ourselves fully with the statement made by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries. Slovakia considers it one of the most important duties of the world community to engage in common efforts with regard to disarmament, peaceful operations, global stability and international peace. Today, we can see possibilities for global disarmament that could hardly have been predicted a few years ago. Now that the cold war has ended, super-Power confrontation has been replaced by super-Power cooperation aimed at eliminating weapons of mass destruction. The climate for arms control and disarmament has never been better.

The main achievement of the disarmament agenda this year was undoubtedly the success of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was agreed to without a vote, promotes stability, confidence and favourable conditions for the non-proliferation regime and nuclear disarmament. It is supposed to be an important step in the process of designing the architecture of global security.

We recognize the indefinite extension of the NPT as a fundamental precondition for positive development and success in the area of nuclear disarmament. The growing number of parties to the NPT is confirmation of States' common interest in, and their political will to achieve the goal of, the elimination of the most dangerous weapons of mass destruction. The Treaty helps to reduce the nuclear threat faced by each and every one of the parties to it, lays the basis for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and is a promising development in the field of arms control and disarmament.

The Slovak Republic supports the objectives of the NPT with regard to the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which can be an important contribution to regional and global security. We appreciate the announcement by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America that they intend to sign the relevant Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga in the first half of 1996.

Achieving universality for the Non-Proliferation Treaty is, we believe, an important precondition for complete nuclear disarmament. Slovakia welcomes the accession of Belarus, Kazakstan, Ukraine and South Africa as non-nuclear-weapon States and their voluntary renunciation of nuclear weapons. Once again we appeal to the small number of States that are still outside the NPT to accede to it.

One aspect of the security of non-nuclear-weapon States is the provision of security assurances against the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons. Declarations of the nuclear-weapon States, together with Security Council resolution 984 (1995), represent an important step towards this goal. We hope that such commitments will be followed by an international legal instrument.

Slovakia notes with satisfaction the reaffirmation by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference of the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as a fundamental element of the Treaty which plays an irreplaceable role in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and helps to strengthen

mutual confidence. Slovakia fulfils strictly its obligations under the full-scale safeguards agreement with the IAEA. Inspectors from the Agency are not required to obtain a visa to enter Slovakia, and they have free access to any nuclear facility.

We fully support all measures aimed at strengthening the safeguards system with a view to ensuring that nuclear material is used exclusively for peaceful purposes and to avoiding breaches of obligations such as those that occurred in the case of Iraq and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We have been supporting the IAEA Programme "93+2" on strengthening and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system. Slovakia believes that measures aimed at strengthening the safeguards system should be interconnected with effective and transparent multilateral export control and activities intended to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear materials.

We are pleased that the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty have been making progress. As the draft treaty continued to be the main focus of the discussions at the 1995 session of the Conference on Disarmament, Slovakia has expressed its regret at the decision of some nuclear-weapon States to conduct further nuclear-test explosions we consider the nuclear-testing moratorium an important element of the preparations for the Treaty. As Slovakia has advocated that the treaty prohibit all nuclear tests, without exception, we applaud especially the far-sighted decision of France, the United Kingdom and the United States to accept the "zero yield" principle. We note with satisfaction the commitment made by all nuclear-weapon States to sign the comprehensive treaty not later than in 1996.

An inseparable aspect of the nuclear-disarmament issue is a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices — a cut-off treaty. Slovakia profoundly regrets that the Conference on Disarmament failed to meet the requests of the United Nations General Assembly and the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference in this regard.

I am pleased to announce that the Slovak Republic has now joined the family of countries that have ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. We hope that this action will contribute to the global efforts to secure the early entry into force of the Convention. We appreciate the efforts of the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which has been elaborating the practical elements of the Convention. Not only do we have experience but we are ready to contribute to the effective work of the Secretariat and to the training of the Organization's future inspectors.

We consider the Convention to be above all a disarmament treaty. We welcome the Preparatory Commission's initiative of sending an international delegation, known as "the Troika", to Moscow and Washington in order to speed up the process of ratification in these two important countries. We are firmly convinced that the message of the international community has been reflected in a positive way in both capitals. The Slovak Republic fully supports the call of the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to complete the process of ratification in the near future so that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons can begin to fulfil its obligations in regard to the disposal of supplies of chemical agents of war.

The Convention entails more than these purposes. It is also designed for cooperation and assistance in cases of the use or threat of the use of chemical weapons. The recent tragic incident that occurred in Japan proves that terrorists are able to abuse even such barbaric means as poisonous chemical agents. On that account, we perceive the Convention as an instrument that can contribute in a substantial way to the non-proliferation of dangerous agents and prohibit them from falling into the wrong hands. In this respect, the Slovak Republic has enacted the necessary legislation to ensure that the spirit and wording of the Convention will be fulfilled 100 per cent on our part. We are ready to discuss and share our experience in this field.

We are fully convinced that, next year, the General Assembly of the United Nations will be able to welcome a representative of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and to hear a report of the initial results of the work of the Organization. This might be the best example of effectiveness and pragmatism in the implementation of an international treaty on the disposal of a whole category of weapons of mass destruction.

As far as the Biological Weapons Convention is concerned, it is imperative that its verification regime be bolstered in the near future in order to enhance the importance of the Convention. We do hope that this goal will be achieved at the Review Conference next year. Ever since the Convention came into existence, Slovakia has participated actively in the implementation of an effective control of transfers of strategic and sensitive materials and technologies. We consider this one of the ways to assert the principles of a global security policy. This is an opportunity for us to contribute to the control of armaments and thus to convince our partners about Slovakia's active approach and willingness to share the responsibility for the strengthening

of mutual security and cooperation within the international community.

At the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, the Slovak Republic has been in favour of the earliest possible limitation of the availability of anti-personnel land-mines, a considerable strengthening of Protocol II, a substantial increase in the number of States parties to the Convention, and the adoption of Protocol IV.

Slovakia was among the very first countries to respond to the United Nations resolutions on the subject and to introduce an embargo on exports of anti-personnel land-mines. We also highly appreciate the organization of the International Meeting on Mine Clearance held under the auspices of the Secretary-General in Vienna last July. This forum stressed the need for a more active approach to the complex problem of anti-personnel land-mines and their indiscriminate use, which inflicts horrendous casualties upon the civilian population, including innocent children.

The Slovak Republic takes an active part in, and supports, the process of arms control and disarmament both within and outside the framework of the United Nations. We consider the Conference on Disarmament the most appropriate forum in this field. Let me, therefore, reiterate that we continue to believe in our right to fill the seat vacated by the former Czecho-Slovakia; only Slovakia has a legitimate right to assume this seat. Membership in the Conference on Disarmament is of paramount political importance to us. We are fully convinced that linking the issue of filling the vacancy in the Conference with the broader issue of expansion of the membership is unjustifiable. On the other hand, we hope that, besides resolving the specific question of Slovakia, the requirement for expansion of the Conference will be met without delay so that appropriate representativeness of this body can be achieved.

Mr. Guillén (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like to join in the congratulations extended to the Chairman on his election to chair the First Committee. I extend those congratulations also to the other members of the bureau. Rest assured that the delegation of Peru will cooperate resolutely with you.

In its foreign policy, Peru has always advocated and insisted on rejecting the production and use of weapons of mass destruction, and has called for a reduction of weapons and for the use of resources which are then released to promote economic and social development. This request falls within the framework of the renewed concept of security and is also aimed at maintaining the stability of legitimately constituted governments now faced with threats which, like drug trafficking and terrorism, can reach regional and world proportions.

Latin America and the Caribbean was one of the first regions to promote these efforts. Since the Treaty of Tlatelolco created the first inhabited zone on the planet free from nuclear weapons, we, the Latin American and Caribbean countries, have adopted initiatives which would make it possible for this region to become one of the most active sources of regional disarmament efforts.

Within the framework of our efforts, Peru feels that there are three elements which must be considered in order to strengthen this regional approach. Firstly, every regional disarmament effort should take into account the specific conditions and characteristics of each region. Secondly, therefore, it should also recognize that there are differing regional levels of progress in the field of disarmament, from adopting measures to promote confidence and security to establishing effective agreements covering all aspects of disarmament and arms limitation. Thirdly, the specific characteristic of each regional situation must be considered. That means that, while it is difficult to transfer disarmament experiences to other regions, there are very important reference points for drafting wide-ranging recommendations which may well be used by all regions interested in or committed to the process of disarmament and which can be adjusted most effectively to their own needs.

Similarly, my delegation feels it necessary to point out that security in the Latin American region is also closely linked to the process of economic and social development and, hence, the need for integral plans for regional security which spell out the social, economic, humanitarian and environmental aspects alongside the military issues.

Within the conceptual framework I have described, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is the primary mechanism for international control of the arms trade. My delegation believes that the Register makes a substantial contribution to the promotion of confidence and that it represents the first step in the process of negotiating on disarmament or arms reduction at the world, regional and subregional levels. Peru feels that the effectiveness of the Register should be improved by the inclusion of information on the actual existence of weapons as well as on production and local procurement, and that it should also include new categories of weapons. Peru has furnished the Register with the required information.

In this connection, we are alarmed at the persistence of clandestine activities that thwart the control of international arms transfers and divert the resources needed for development to military spending and arms stockpiles. It will be recalled that in this connection Peru has suggested that the assistance of specialized non-governmental bodies, university research centres and the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament could be helpful in identifying and studying such practices.

Here, we also view as anachronistic forms of subsidy and State economic assistance that promote disguised stockpiling and allow some States to evade the criteria set forth in the Register of Conventional Arms. Unfortunately, such attitudes aid and abet the production and transfer of conventional weapons and thereby pose serious threats to security within the framework of the qualitatively new international context.

The question of international arms transfers calls for comprehensive treatment by our Organization so that all its aspects and consequences can be considered. Aside from its impact on security and on the economy, arms transfers have a destabilizing political and social effect. The illicit or clandestine traffic in weapons is also both the cause and the effect of excessive and uncontrolled arms production. We should recall that inaction with regard to illicit arms trafficking has led to its unprecedented intensification, which is especially dangerous in view of the persistent problems we must face in a world replete with potential conflicts. Producer States, therefore, have the obligation to include or establish more effective controls over the transfer of the weapons produced to other countries and to submit information about them to the Register. Similarly, we find it unacceptable that the permanent members of the Security Council responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security should be the principal exporters of weapons to the third world, where the greatest number of conflicts have occurred since the founding of the Organization.

This year the international community has resumed its efforts to reach the final objective of eliminating anti-personnel land-mines through moratoriums on their production and export as well by limiting the indiscriminate effects of their use. We regret the failure of the recent international meeting on amendment of the Convention on certain conventional weapons, held at Geneva, which will have serious repercussions. In the specific case of my own country, men, women and children have suffered from this scourge on their own land, where anti-personnel land-mines have been placed by foreign military personnel, an illegal act in violation of international law.

Peru deems it essential to adopt the necessary measures to eliminate such instruments. In that process it supports the establishment of a voluntary fund to finance information and training programmes on de-mining, to which we will definitely contribute. Similarly, we deem it essential to establish improved controls over the producers and exporters of land-mines and to set up standards to determine the responsibilities of States and the application of sanctions for damage caused to non-combatant victims and the environment.

Within our efforts both to accelerate the process of regional disarmament and to disseminate information on the goals of general and complete disarmament, the United Nations regional centres play an important role, which must be maintained and strengthened. Notwithstanding the financial problems the regional centres are facing, we do not feel it appropriate to shut them down. We recognize, however, the urgent need to find alternative sources of funding for those Centres. Peru has therefore asked for the cooperation of countries in the Western Hemisphere, non-governmental organizations and academic foundations and institutions. At the same time, we need to redefine the goals of the regional centres and adapt them to present-day challenges in international relations with regard to cooperation for peace and security.

The activities of the centres are dependent on the guidelines laid down by States and on the resources that States give them. The delegation of Peru feels that the Regional Centre in Latin America and the Caribbean can be an effective instrument for ensuring the promotion, in the region, of a culture of peace, facilitating the redirection of funds from current military spending to social-development activities and developing a new approach to preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping and peace-building. Finally, the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean must become an instrument for creating awareness with regard to disarmament and security in the region consonant with the post-cold-war era.

At the beginning of this year the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) decided on the indefinite extension of that Treaty. Similarly, we adopted Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. Peru supported that decision because it regards the NPT as the only available mechanism for continuing the process of nuclear disarmament and achieving cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We therefore reject continued nuclear testing and deplore the resumption of such testing by some nuclear-weapon States. My country will continue to play a part in joint activities to repudiate such activities, as it did

in the common position taken by the South Pacific Permanent Commission, and we also welcome the historic meeting held recently by the States parties to the Treaties of Tlatelolco and Rarotonga, which we view as the beginning of a dynamic understanding between those two groups.

Peru has noted with satisfaction the recent announcement by France, the United States of America and the United Kingdom that they are prepared to sign the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga. Those signatures and the prompt ratification of the Protocols will lead to the consolidation of the process of nuclear disarmament and will facilitate the establishment of a southern hemisphere free from nuclear weapons.

Mr. Al-Thaqafi (Saudi Arabia)(*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me pleasure, Mr. Chairman, to begin by congratulating you on your election to chair the First Committee at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. I wish you and the other officers of the Committee every success in conducting our work, and I would express the hope that we shall all be able to work in concert for the achievement of the goal which we have come here to achieve, namely, the creation, for our children and for coming generations, of a new world free of all weapons of mass destruction.

From the beginning, the position of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been one of support for all treaties and conventions that aim at eliminating all types of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, because we in the Kingdom are eager to see the world's inhabitants live in an atmosphere free from the threat of weapons of mass destruction and devastation. My country's Government has always attached great importance to all efforts that aim at eliminating such weapons from all regions of the world, and in particular from the Middle East. We have, therefore, participated in all the activities of the specialized committees of the General Assembly and in the work of the technical committee established at the 101st session of the League of Arab States.

In this respect, we are pleased to convey the gratification and satisfaction of the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at the General Assembly's consensus adoption of resolution 49/71 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In this regard, I call on the parties concerned in the region to adopt practical measures to translate this objective into reality.

The idea of establishing a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East dates back to 1974, when it was first proposed to the General Assembly. Since then, the General Assembly has adopted resolutions every year calling for the establishment of such a zone. The concept was further developed in 1990 with a call to make the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. The General Assembly annually adopts a consensus resolution in which it calls for the establishment of such a zone and urges all the countries of the region to accede to the NPT.

Though more than 20 years have passed since the first United Nations call for establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, some of the countries of the region which have a nuclear capability continue to procrastinate, have yet to heed the international calls for accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and have failed to date to submit their nuclear facilities to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The Government of Saudi Arabia was keen to participate in a positive and effective manner in the Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the NPT held in New York in April 1995. We have reaffirmed our abiding belief that the effectiveness of the Treaty must be enhanced by strengthening the safeguards regime of the Vienna IAEA and ensuring its universality. The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is of the opinion that a number of controls and criteria must be elaborated with a view to achieving the hoped-for progress in all aspects of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in line with resolution 1 (I) of 1946. Consequently, the Government of the servant of the two holy shrines appeals to all countries that have not done so to hasten to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible, in order to contribute to the establishment of international security and stability.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia effectively participated in the Review Conference of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects, which was recently held in Geneva and completed its work in Vienna. The land-mines Protocol was discussed at that Conference. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has contributed to the voluntary trust fund set up by the United Nations for assistance in mine-clearance in countries afflicted by such weapons among which are a number of Islamic countries. Those countries have suffered the ravages of war in the past. This support bespeaks my country's faith and understanding of the fact that these mines, which claim thousands of innocent victims every year, also threaten the inhabitants of neighbouring countries.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was one of the first countries to sign the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. We participate actively in all the periodic meetings convened by the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We are now working to establish a national authority in the Kingdom for direct coordination and liaison with the OPCW.

The system represented by the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is an important confidence-building measure, but will not be effective until it applies to all weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, and their vectors and delivery systems. The Register must also cover conventional weapons that are domestically produced and its measures must apply in a balanced and non-selective manner in order for it to serve the national-security interests of all States.

These are the pillars on which rests the policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia towards all issues falling under the question of weapons of mass destruction. We ask God Almighty to spare us and succeeding generations the evil of those weapons and to allow the peoples of the world to live in peace and stability.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I should like, first of all, to congratulate Mr. Erdenechuluun on his election to the chairmanship of this important Committee. I am convinced that his able leadership and diplomatic skill will enable the Committee successfully to address all the items on its agenda.

Over the past 50 years, the United Nations has attached priority attention to the issues related to disarmament and security in order to satisfy the desire of humanity to live in a new, peaceful world without war. The international community has witnessed some progress in activating the bilateral and multilateral negotiations for disarmament and multilateral disarmament treaties, reflecting the new situation that has developed in the post-cold-war era.

This notwithstanding, the desires of peace-loving people, in particular of the non-nuclear-weapon States, have not yet been represented in a series of earlier negotiations aimed at achieving disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament. The recent disarmament conferences have focused primarily on the control of a quantitative reduction of nuclear arsenals. Consequently, the ongoing disarmament efforts cannot adequately address the issue of a qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and there remains an evasive concept on what approach should be taken to the existence of nuclear weaponry.

The nuclear-weapon States pledged themselves to the complete abolition of nuclear weapons when the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was extended indefinitely. However, they are still obsessed with the cold- war-era concept of nuclear deterrence, a concept with which they continue to justify their permanent possession and use of nuclear weapons. The nuclear-weapon States must sincerely implement their commitment to nuclear disarmament under the NPT in order to meet the desire of humanity for a new, peaceful world free from the threat of a nuclear war.

Three years have elapsed since the opening of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. When the Register of Conventional Arms came into operation, humankind expected that it would greatly contribute to confidence-building and disarmament. However, there has been growing doubt about whether the Register has indeed made a substantial contribution to controlling the arms race and the transfer of conventional arms.

Recently, the Western countries have been much concerned over the control of conventional arms, contending that the stockpiling of conventional arms would be a potential source of instability. Their true intention, however, is simply to distract the attention of the world from nuclear weapons. It is natural that the continued export of conventional arms by the Western countries will eventually lead to the stockpiling of conventional arms in other countries.

The Western countries are now fanning competition for arms purchases among Member States by exhibiting sophisticated weapons in the markets through the Register of Conventional Arms. The Register merely gives Member States the impression that if they do not buy this or that weapon, they will be in danger because their neighbour has bought it already, and thus plays the role of advertising, which stimulates competition for the purchase and sale of conventional arms.

All these facts vividly show that the Register is beneficial only for the arms-exporting countries, to satisfy their own interests. What the hell is the Register needed for then, we wonder? We would have hoped that the United Nations would not set up such an insignificant device as the Register of Conventional Arms, but that it would rather do something useful for international peace and security.

Even after the end of the cold war, international security remains a matter of great concern to the international community. In order to ensure international peace and security, the principles of equality and impartiality should be observed in international relations. Although there are big and small countries, which are at different levels of development, they are all equal and the big countries should take more responsibility for observing the principles of equality and impartiality in international relations than other countries. However, some Member States have continued to resort to interference in the internal affairs of others and to pressure Member States, in particular those in disputed regions, in disregard of the principles of equality and impartiality in international relations, even though the cold war is over. This is a root cause of ceaseless conflicts in various parts of the world. In order to put an end to conflicts and ensure international security as desired by the international community, international relations should be democratized, and arbitrariness and intervention by certain countries should be stopped.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the division of the Korean peninsula. The 50-year-old division of the country has imposed untold misery upon the Korean people, and the mistrust and confrontation between the north and south of Korea persist even today, when the world trend is moving towards *détente*. Because of the division of the Korean peninsula by foreign forces, the peninsula remains in unabated tension, which in turn has a direct negative impact on international peace and security.

From the early days of the national division, the respected and beloved leader Comrade Kim Il Sung put forward a number of reasonable proposals for the independent and peaceful reunification of the country and devoted all his efforts to their realization up to the last moment of his life. Fatherly leader Comrade Kim Il Sung advanced the three principles of independence, peaceful reunification, and a great national unity in the early 1970s, as well as a proposal in 1980, fifteen years ago, for national reunification through confederation based on the concept of "one nation and one State, two systems and two Governments" on the basis of the aforementioned three principles. In 1993, he also put forward the Ten-Point Programme for the Great Unity of the Whole Nation for the Country's Reunification, which offered a realistic and concrete way for the realization of reunification.

The proposals for national reunification put forward by the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung are the most reasonable and above-board programme of reunification, fully reflecting the reality of the north and south of Korea, characterized by differences in political ideas and systems, as well as the Korean people's desire for national reunification on the principle of neither side conquering or being conquered by the other.

The pan-national unified State to be established in accordance with the proposal for reunification through confederation will form a confederated government in which the two regional autonomous governments of the north and south of Korea participate on an equal footing, and will be an independent, peaceful, non-aligned and neutral State that does not depend on any other big Power.

Any desire for the resumption of the north-south dialogue and the improvement of inter-Korean relations towards eventual national reunification can be achieved only by practical deeds, not by mere words. As long as the National Security Law of south Korea — which defines the fellow-countryman of the north as the enemy — and the concrete wall, a symbol of national division, remain in place, the south Korean authorities have no qualification or justification whatsoever for talking about the improvement of north-south relations and national reunification. Therefore, all the legal and physical barriers impeding national unity, reconciliation and reunification should be removed first for the north-south dialogue.

The pressing task of ensuring peace and security on the Korean peninsula and hastening national reunification is to establish a new peace arrangement. There are two categories of issues related to the establishment of a new peace arrangement: one to be solved between the north and south of Korea and another to be settled between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States.

The north and south of Korea adopted the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression, and Cooperation and Exchanges between the north and south in December 1991, which is the *de facto* written inter-Korean peace arrangement. All that the north and south have to do is to put this peace arrangement into operation. However, no peace arrangement has yet been established between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. The DPRK has therefore proposed to the United States negotiations to establish a peace arrangement to replace the present armistice mechanism. The armistice mechanism existing on the Korean peninsula has become a nominal one. This mechanism has been paralysed so long that it can no longer supervise the present armistice status, let alone ensure peace on the Korean peninsula.

Once a new peace arrangement is established between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America, which is primarily responsible for peace

on the Korean peninsula, the legal and institutional mechanism for ensuring peace on the Korean peninsula will be arranged. This will, in turn, help operate the present peace arrangement between the north and the south, dramatically ease tensions on the Korean peninsula and contribute to stability in the North-East Asia and Pacific region.

Today, the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula is being resolved efficiently since the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States adopted the Agreed Framework in Geneva in October last year and both have been taking practical steps to implement it. In this regard, we would like to draw the attention of this Committee to the joint United States-south Korean military exercise, code-named "Foal Eagle-95", now under way in south Korea. This is, indeed, the same version of the "Team Spirit" joint exercise, merely renamed "Foal Eagle". This action clearly goes against the spirit of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States Agreed Framework and constitutes a serious challenge to the proposal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the establishment of a new peace arrangement.

If the United States remains as sincere in its approach as it was during its discussion with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the nuclear issue, the issue of the establishment of a new peace arrangement on the Korean peninsula will certainly be resolved.

The continuation of the state of armistice in Korea still links the relationship between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United Nations to the continuing belligerency. The United Nations, which is also responsible for the Korean question, should pay due attention to the establishment of a new peace arrangement and work hard to do its part in promoting its materialization. This is the only logical course, both with a view to making a clean slate of the United Nations past unsavoury relationship with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a dignified United Nations Member State, and in the light of implementing resolution 3390 B (XXX), calling for the dissolution of the "United Nations Command" and the replacement of the Armistice Agreement with a peace agreement on the Korean peninsula.

The dissolution of the "United Nations Command" in south Korea, which is the United States armed forces in the true sense of the word, is the key to ending the belligerent relationship between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United Nations and to improving it. Nevertheless, it has been alleged continuously that the dissolution of the "United Nations Command" falls to the authority of the Security Council. In its resolution 84 (1950), adopted in July 1950, which is claimed as the legal basis for the "United Nations Command", the Security Council did not decide to establish the "Command" but recommended only that the assistance of Member States be made available to the United States-led unified forces. This is a clear example of the way in which the United Nations has ever since been misused against a small nation by a big Power.

We hope that the United Nations will divest the foreign forces in south Korea of the United Nations helmet and dissolve the "United Nations Command" in accordance with resolution 3390 B (XXX) in order to correct the past wrongdoings and restore its credibility, which is now in jeopardy.

In conclusion, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea expresses its hope that the Committee will achieve fruitful results during the current discussion of all agenda items, in conformity with the demand of the new era and the desires of the world's peace-loving people.

Mr. Shewaneh (Ethiopia): Allow me to congratulate Mr. Erdenechuluun on his election to the chairmanship of this body. We are confident that we will achieve successful results under his wise and able chairmanship. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau.

We are gathered here at a unique and historic moment to celebrate our achievements and review the shortcomings of the past five decades in the field of disarmament and international security. After half a century of collective searching for peace and security, we regret to find that our failures still outweigh our recorded achievements. However, we are also pleased to acknowledge that major steps have already been taken, particularly after the end of the cold war.

Just five months ago, during the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) we adopted a consensus resolution extending the Treaty indefinitely. We established a milestone in the non-proliferation regime through our full support for the permanent status of the Treaty. We also believe that the NPT, extended indefinitely, will continue to serve as a catalyst to our endeavours to curb nuclear-weapon proliferation and to foster disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament.

The resumption of nuclear-weapon tests after the extension of the NPT is a development contrary to the expectations of most of us. We commend the Russian

Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States for their commitment to their respective decisions on a moratorium. We support the call made to the other nuclear-weapon States to follow suit by exercising the utmost restraint in nuclear-testing.

The Conference on Disarmament began negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty in January 1994, in accordance with resolution 48/70, of which my country had the privilege of being a sponsor. We applaud the measures recently taken by the nuclear-weapon States for a true zero-yield option. The will expressed to sign a comprehensive and effectively verifiable test-ban treaty in 1996 can now, we believe, materialize without reservation.

A realistic approach to nuclear disarmament demands action to curb the further production of nuclear weapons. We therefore believe that the Conference on Disarmament should be empowered with specific mandates to negotiate a cut-off treaty banning the production and stockpiling of fissile materials for nuclear-weapons purposes.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the globe is an integral part of nuclear disarmament. Thirty years ago, in July 1964, the first Summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was held in Addis Ababa, adopted the resolution that declared Africa a denuclearized zone. The General Assembly of the United Nations has also adopted a series of consensus resolutions since 1965 calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa.

After years of negotiation and hard-work, the OAU-United Nations Group of Experts has come out with a final draft treaty for a second time. The African Heads of State and Government adopted the final text of the African nuclear-weapon-free zone Treaty during the thirty-first ordinary session of the OAU Summit, which was held in June 1995 in Addis Ababa. We need more and more nuclear-weapon-free zones. An African nuclear-weapon-free zone would strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. It would also enhance international peace and security. We therefore call upon the other members of the international community, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to join us in adopting the Pelindaba text of the African nuclear-weapon-free zone Treaty.

After nearly two decades of arduous negotiations we were able to adopt resolution 47/39, in which the General Assembly commended the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction. The Convention has been open for signature since January 1993. It is commendable that 159 States have already signed the Convention. However, its ratification is long overdue. On our part, the legal and administrative process is under way to enable Ethiopia to be one of the first 65 nations to ratify the Convention in order to ensure its enforcement.

Another point of serious concern for my delegation continues to be the excessive production, accumulation and illegal transfer and use of conventional weapons. We support the efforts under way to strengthen the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Transparency in armaments and universal participation in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms would contribute a great deal to conventional disarmament.

In the category of conventional arms are the anti-personnel land-mines, which kill or wound more than 20,000 people annually. Despite the recorded achievement of clearing about 10,000 land-mines a year, it is reported that between 2 million and 5 million land-mines are laid during the same period.

We appreciate the measures taken by a number of countries to curb the export of such deadly weapons, in accordance with resolutions 48/75 K and 49/75 D. We also welcome the outcome of the July 1995 international meeting on mine clearance and the pledges made there. As statistics on mine clearance clearly show, the task ahead is enormous. The voluntary trust fund needs therefore to be greatly strengthened. These efforts are basically reactions to the problems faced. Therefore, there is a compelling need for a total ban on these insidious weapons in common use.

I should like to conclude by reiterating that disarmament and international security need greater attention and our common, unequivocal efforts and commitments. For the past three days we have celebrated the jubilee of our Organization. We will be able to celebrate the centennial of the United Nations by exchanging success stories if the resolutions, declarations and programmes of actions we have adopted in the last 50 years are fully implemented. I am convinced of this because I believe that, if there is a will, then there is definitely a way.

Mr. Ayewah (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation wishes to congratulate Mr. Erdenechuluun on his election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at this historic session of the United Nations General Assembly. We are confident that under his able guidance our deliberations will be successful. We wish to assure him and the other officers of the Committee of our support as they carry out the duties of their important offices. We also avail ourselves of

this opportunity to express appreciation to Ambassador Rodriguez of Ecuador for his stewardship during the forty-ninth session.

A little over fifty years ago, mankind experienced for the first time the destructive power of the atom and almost immediately thereafter resolved to put a stop to it. The first resolution of the General Assembly, adopted in January 1946, established a Commission which was given, among others, the urgent task of making specific proposals for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Almost fifty years after that resolution, the unanimous decision to extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) indefinitely was adopted. That decision did not take into account whether or not the provisions of the Treaty had been strictly complied with by States parties, nor did it lay down a specific plan for nuclear disarmament. Indeed, the appropriateness of that decision has already been put to the test by the nuclear tests carried out soon after the recent indefinite extension of the NPT.

Two other decisions were taken at the Review and Extension Conference of the NPT, namely, "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" and "Strengthening the Review Process for the Treaty". Those two decisions could be likened to damage-control measures tardily adopted after a situation has got out of control. The effectiveness of these measures is left totally to chance.

For the majority of those who acceded to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States, non-proliferation was not the objective but merely a process towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. If, after 25 years of the NPT, more nuclear weapons exist in our world than existed when the Treaty was signed, then let it not be said that the decision to make the Treaty permanent was a consensus decision. It was not. That decision to maintain nuclear weapons in perpetuity in the hands of a few diminishes somewhat the achievement of the United Nations in the area of peace and security.

Nigeria takes note of the commitment to achieve a true zero-yield test ban by 1996. However, we believe that the ban should be of unlimited duration in order better to ensure nuclear disarmament. Additional, long-overdue measures of nuclear disarmament are the cut-off in the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes and the granting of security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States in a legally binding instrument. Both of these measures are already on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. We wish to call upon all States to make conscious efforts to ensure progress on these two agenda items during the 1996 session of that forum. In all sincerity, these are measures that should be carried out in this century.

At this session the General Assembly will be called upon to endorse the Treaty of Pelindaba, the objective of which is to establish Africa as a nuclear-weapon- free zone, pursuant both to the regional objective of peace, security and development and to the global objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world. For Nigeria, the conclusion of the Treaty is the realization of a longstanding and major foreign-policy objective. Very early in our nationhood we demonstrated our commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free Africa when, in 1961, we boldly opposed the testing of nuclear weapons on the continent and modified our diplomatic relations accordingly.

Since then we have continued to work with others at the United Nations to remove all obstacles to a nuclear-weapon-free Africa. Today, we are proud to have been in the vanguard of that initiative, which has now led to this historic achievement. We look forward to a swift ratification of the Treaty of Pelindaba within the coming year. Nigeria is confident that the number of ratifications necessary for its entry into force will be attained in record time. We take this opportunity to call upon all nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate their respect for the status of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone by signing the relevant protocols attached to the Treaty.

My delegation wishes to thank Mr. Ian Kenyon, the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, for the information contained in his statement to the First Committee at this fiftieth session. The need for speedy action by all Member States to ensure the early entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention cannot be overemphasized, nor can the need for all States parties to respect all of the provisions of the Convention, in particular article XI, the implementation of which constitutes the best guarantee for its universal, harmonious and non-discriminatory operation.

Nigeria, like many other States, considers the Chemical Weapons Convention to be not just a security treaty but also an avenue for promoting the prosperity of States parties. In this connection we would like to note the positive outcome of past regional seminars and to thank the Provisional Secretariat for its cooperation. We urge it to continue to support future seminars in the African region. Furthermore, care should be taken to ensure that the principle of transparency in the work of the Preparatory Commission is maintained and that deserved attention is

given to equitable geographical representation in the secretariat's recruitment policies.

Nigeria wishes to support continued efforts to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction through an appropriate verification regime that will not deny developing countries access to vital technical know-how and equipment for development in the biological, medical and other related fields.

The Convention on bacteriological and toxin weapons, as well as the Chemical Weapons Convention, banned biological, toxin and chemical weapons in perpetuity. The lack of verification of one or the delayed entry-into-force of the other must not lead anyone to view those two Conventions as mere non-proliferation measures. They are prohibition measures, placing equal obligation on all never again to develop, possess, stockpile or use such weapons. The tendency to put them in the same category as nuclear weapons can only turn back the hands of the clock, and that would be a disservice to humanity. Rather, let us reiterate our commitments to the total prohibition of those weapons as established by the two Conventions and press ahead for a similar instrument on the most lethal of them all, nuclear weapons.

Nigeria is of the view that conventional arms control and disarmament should be pursued on both global and regional levels through multilaterally negotiated regimes which place great emphasis on confidence-building measures. The United Nations General Assembly has endorsed several sets of guidelines and recommendations in this connection. These include, *inter alia*, the 1988 guidelines for appropriate types of confidence-building measures and guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security. My delegation cannot, therefore, support any suggestion for the development of a code of conduct for the transfer of arms, which can only constitute additional sets of conditionalities for arms purchases.

In conclusion, Nigeria would like to see the First Committee at this historic fiftieth session of the General Assembly motivated by the desire for cooperation in finding genuine and lasting solutions to those problems that continue to confront us in the area of disarmament in the remaining part of this twentieth century, in order to bequeath to the next generation in the twenty-first century a world which is indeed free of these weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. García (Venezuela)(*interpretation from Spanish*): First of all, allow me to take this opportunity to extend my delegations's congratulations to the Chairman on his election to preside over the First Committee at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. We also wish to congratulate the other officers of the Committee. We are certain that under their guidance the work of the Committee will have positive results.

Venezuela has always supported the efforts of the international community to achieve a complete ban on nuclear testing. At their recent meeting at Quito the Heads of State and Government of the Permanent Mechanism for Consultation and Concerted Policy Action — the Rio Group — expressed their profound concern at and repudiation of the resumption of nuclear testing by certain nuclear-weapon States. Thus we are stressing the urgent need to reach agreement on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty no later than 1996.

We were pleased to hear the announcement made in the General Assembly by the Secretary of State of the United States of America, Mr. Warren Christopher, that his country was prepared in the coming year to conclude a treaty banning all nuclear testing. We firmly support that position, and we hope that the other nuclear-weapon States will be prepared to follow suit. Until that objective is attained, all States, and especially those officially recognized as nuclear-weapon States, are committed to observing a moratorium on nuclear testing.

I should also like to emphasize the fact that there are now more than 157 States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This demonstrates the will of the international community to avoid the use of, and to put a definitive end to, such weapons, which are capable of wiping the human race from the face of the Earth.

Latin America and the Caribbean are a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The Treaty of Tlatelolco, to which more than 30 of the States of the region are parties and signatories, is a guarantee and an example of the political will to ban the non-peaceful use of nuclear energy. Venezuela supports all United Nations initiatives and efforts aimed at establishing nuclear-free zones in various regions of the world and hopes that this will become a reality in the near future.

Another extremely important issue is that of negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of weapons of mass destruction. We have noted the positive changes that have taken place on the international scene, and we trust that the Conference

on Disarmament can begin concrete negotiations to achieve an international treaty clearly setting forth those assurances without delay.

Venezuela is among the States signatories to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. National legislative steps towards its ratification are at a very advanced stage and we hope to deposit the instrument of ratification with the United Nations in due time.

My delegation also firmly supports strengthening the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and hopes that the Ad Hoc Committee set up by the Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention will effectively fulfil the tasks entrusted to it in order to ensure that negotiations are concluded on a verification protocol strengthening that Convention.

Furthermore, we welcome the progress achieved during the first part of the Review Conference of the 1981 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects with the adoption of the new Protocol IV on blinding laser weapons. We deeply regret, however, that the Conference was unable to achieve agreement on a true and effective strengthening of Protocol II, on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of anti-personnel land-mines. My delegation hopes that this will be achieved at the resumed meeting of the Review Conference.

As to conventional weapons, my delegation notes with concern the growing traffic in these weapons, which is a destabilizing element and has a serious effect on areas of tension, increasing insecurity and jeopardizing the peace process. Faced with this situation, we trust that the Conference on Disarmament will continue to address the question of the transparency of armaments in order to achieve viable and satisfactory results that will contribute to international peace and security.

We attach great importance to this question and believe that greater efforts must be made to find ways of controlling the situation, without prejudice to the legitimate rights of States to defence and security in the context of growing transparency through an effective register of conventional arms.

Year after year, in this Committee and other disarmament forums, we have reiterated our political will to achieve the objective of general and complete disarmament. This goal has not yet been achieved, however, and we continue to owe this debt to the international community. We are convinced that the time has come to take firm strides towards negotiating general and complete disarmament, which will put an end to the uncertainty created by the increase in weapons of mass destruction and the development of new technologies in the military field.

In paragraph 3 of resolution 49/85 the incoming Chairman of the First Committee is requested to continue consultations on the further rationalization of the work and effective functioning of the Committee. My delegation feels that this is an extremely important matter if we are to improve the work of the Committee. We feel that the fiftieth session of the General Assembly is an appropriate time for achieving substantive progress and conclusions in this field.

Mr. García (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to begin by congratulating Mr. Erdenechuluun on his election to guide the work of the First Committee. We are certain that his wise judgement and experience will ensure that our deliberations will lead to satisfactory results. My delegation will always be prepared to cooperate with him to that end.

There have been many highlights in the field of disarmament and international security over the past year. The Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) approved the indefinite extension of the Treaty. They adopted important decisions on "strengthening the Review Process for the Treaty" and on "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament".

Within the scope of the implementation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, we note with satisfaction that 33 countries of our hemisphere have signed and 32 have ratified it. Similarly, the negative security assurances granted by the nuclear Powers to the Parties to the Treaty are in full force. The existence of a nuclear-weapon-free zone within the area covered by the Treaty of Tlatelolco has thus become a near-reality. Progress has also been made towards the realization of the comprehensive test-ban treaty and it is hoped that our aspirations will be fulfilled in the first half of 1996.

Despite all this, the peace dividends remain to be seen in the field of disarmament and international security. Now that a system of international relations has emerged from a foundation other than that of hostile confrontation between

East and West, and that the doctrine of nuclear deterrence is no longer valid — if in fact it ever was justifiable — we have returned to this room to address several issues that have attracted the concern of the international community.

Nuclear tests have been carried out recently and further tests have been announced. The commitments undertaken by the nuclear Powers at the Review Conference of the NPT to exercise utmost restraint until the comprehensive test-ban treaty enters into force have thus been compromised. Fortunately, the international community has reacted firmly in opposition to those tests. At the recent Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Cartagena, the Heads of State and Government strongly rejected any kind of nuclear testing carried out without the least consideration for its serious environmental consequences and negative impact on international peace, security and stability. Similarly, the Heads of State and Government of the non-aligned countries fervently deplored the resumption and continuation of nuclear testing. They appealed to the nuclear-weapon States to act in a manner consistent with the negotiations on and objectives of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and to end such testing.

Among the issues of disarmament and international security deserving of special attention, we must certainly include the question of conventional weapons and in particular of the illicit traffic in them. My delegation shares the concern shown at the enormous sums of money devoted to the acquisition of weapons and the uncontrolled increase in the illicit traffic in arms, ammunition and explosives.

As was expressed in Colombia's appeal, adopted by the eleventh Summit of the non-aligned countries at their recent meeting in Cartagena:

> "The major arms exporters have taken advantage of the new international situation to increase their sales to developing countries, since the States where such companies operate do not take effective measures to restrict their illicit trade and traffic in weapons to groups of terrorists, mercenaries and common criminals, who enjoy easy access to such weapons thanks to the permissiveness of those who tolerate and promote this profitable business and who benefit from their apathetic behaviour."

Finally, we wish to refer to the serious threat which anti-personnel land-mines pose to peace, security and the lives of millions of individuals throughout the world. That which, for some, is merely another product for export, a statistic, is for hundreds of thousands of individuals, many of them children, the tangible cause of injury or death.

We must deplore the fact that there has been no significant progress in eradicating these instruments designed for mutilation. We therefore reiterate our support for the initiative of an international moratorium on the production and transfer of anti-personnel land-mines, with a view to their complete elimination.

Mr. Ekwall (Sweden): Since this is the first time my delegation has spoken in the First Committee I should like first of all to extend my congratulations to Ambassador Erdenechuluun and to you, Sir, on your elections as Chairman and Vice-Chairman, respectively. You can count on my delegation's full support in the important work before us. Our congratulations go also to the other officers of the Committee.

Last Friday France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America jointly announced their intention to sign the relevant Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga in the first half of 1996. With respect to that announcement, the Swedish Foreign Minister, Mrs. Lena Hjelm-Wallen, made the following statement on 20 October 1995, which I would like to bring to the attention of the Committee. She said:

> "It is very gratifying that France, the United States and the United Kingdom have now decided to accede in the first half of 1996 to the Rarotonga Treaty on a South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone. Sweden warmly welcomes this decision. At the same time, our demand that all nuclear tests should cease immediately stands firm.
>
> "France, the United States and the United Kingdom also made it clear in the Geneva negotiations recently that they want a test-ban treaty which prohibits all nuclear explosions without exception. This is also very welcome, and we assume that it will be possible to achieve a treaty during 1996."

The Acting Chairman: The representative of France has asked to make a statement in exercise of his right of reply, and I now call on him.

Mr. Richier (France)(*interpretation from French*): At this meeting a delegation spoke with regard to the completion of our series of nuclear tests. Once again, his remarks were unacceptable and, I would add, unproductive and pointless.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.